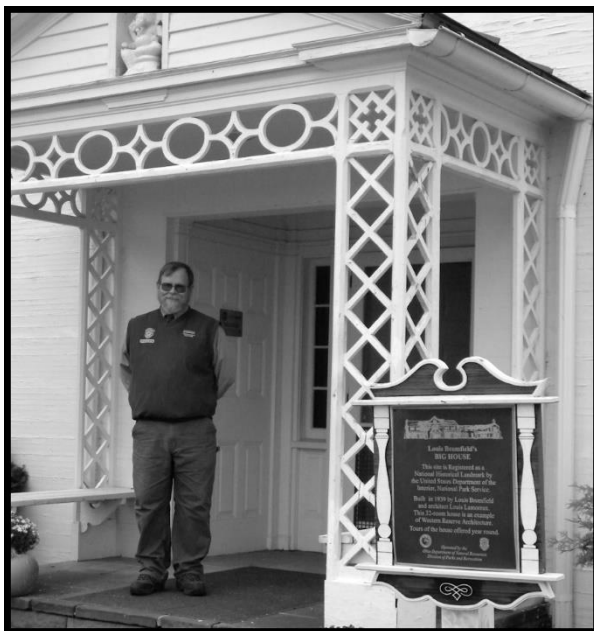




# The Malabar Farm News

A publication of the Malabar Farm Foundation

Spring 2023



## Big House and Farm Tours Resume

Tours of Louis Bromfield's Big House and farm resumed on weekends in April, following the winter hiatus. In May tours of the Big House are offered Tuesday through Sunday at 11:00 am, and 2:00 pm; with farm tours at 12:30 am and 3:30 pm (weather permitting). Beginning on Memorial Day tours will be offered seven days a week.

## Big House Art Restoration and Preservation Program Resumes

The Malabar Farm Foundation has resumed the Big House Art Restoration Program that had to be suspended during the Covid pandemic. To date nearly 45 oil paintings have been professionally cleaned and restored at a cost of approximately \$90,000.

In January an original Bromfield era bedspread from the Humphrey Bogart/Lauren Bacall "Honeymoon" room and the large two-section panel painting located in Louis

Bromfield's Study were delivered to the Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA) in Cleveland for needed repairs and cleaning. There are five additional original Bromfield era bedspreads that will also need attention.

ICA recently hired a new paper conservator. It is hoped that the Foundation will soon be able to add the numerous watercolor paintings, prints, and documents that are part of Louis Bromfield's extensive art collection in the Big House to our restoration work.



Two piece panel painting by Jimmy Reynolds. This is one of several pieces of Jimmy Reynolds art collected by Louis Bromfield

### New Editions of Louis Bromfield Classics

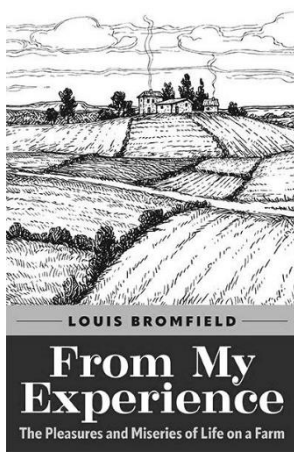
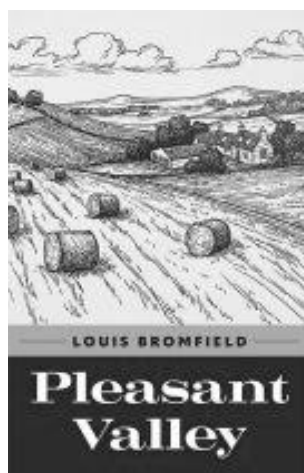
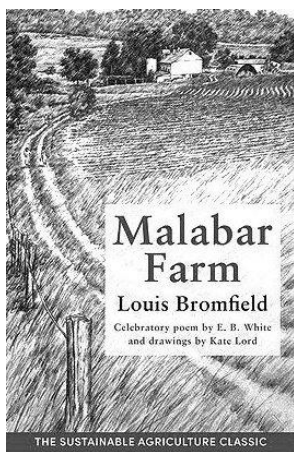
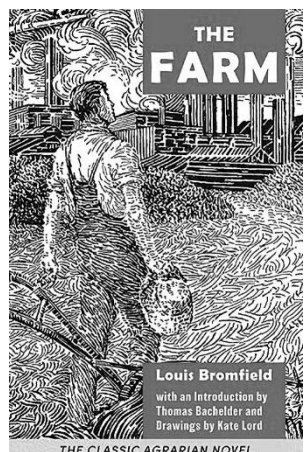
Last year Echo Point Books of Brattleboro, Vermont published a new edition of Louis Bromfield's *Early Autumn*, winner of the 1927 Pulitzer Prize. This year Echo Point Books has also published new editions of Louis Bromfield's novel *The Farm* (1933), and his non-fiction book *Malabar Farm* (1948).

In 2021 the Kent State University Press published *Malabar Farm: Louis Bromfield, Friends of the Land, and the Rise of Sustainable Agriculture*, by Anneliese Abbott. This Spring Kent State also published Bromfield's non-fiction books *Pleasant Valley* (1945), and *From My Experience* (1955). It is hoped that by early this Summer the Malabar Farm Foundation will publish a new edition of Bromfield's second novel, *Possession*, (1925). This book has been out of print for many years.



### Maple Sugaring Days at Malabar

The March 2023 *Maple Syrup Festival* at Malabar Farm State Park was a resounding success. Between 550 and 750 visitors passed through the Sugar Shack on each of the Festival's four days. In addition to enjoying the demonstrations around the Sugar Shack between 250 and 325 guests toured Louis Bromfield's Big House each day.



*In order to produce either good creative writing or good reviewing, or both, there must be both a vitality and enthusiasm, not only the vitality and enthusiasm of the individual creator or reviewer but a kind of mass vitality in the treading public as well.*

— Louis Bromfield



### Listening to the Past and Seeing the Future: Louis Bromfield and His Theory of History

By Paul Suky s, Professor Emeritus  
North Central State College

One of the most exciting experiences to occur while researching the career of a writer is to unexpectedly discover an unpublished manuscript. Such was the case several weeks ago when I discovered a handwritten Bromfield essay titled *Before It's Too Late – What Went Before*. Of course, as it turned out, I had not discovered anything. Instead, I had simply re-discovered a document that had been transcribed and word processed by Tom Bachelder, President of the Board of Trustees of the Malabar Farm Foundation and the author of several books on Bromfield.

Nevertheless, even making a “re-discovery” has its perks. It did not take me long to realize that this re-discovered manuscript was a non-literary expression of Louis Bromfield’s philosophy of history. This was significant because understanding an author’s views on history can reveal the author’s mission as a writer. For example, knowing that Walter Miller promotes a theory of cyclical history helps us understand why the dystopian future he created in his novel *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, was so shocking to readers who, at the midpoint of the twentieth century, believed that progress was inevitable. Miller’s mission had been to deconstruct that false picture of the future and replace it with his own view of history as a tragic tapestry of repeated errors.

In *Before It's Too Late*, Bromfield reveals that he has settled on two theories of history. In the first, he sees “all history” as a series of “waves” driven by human impulses that initially produce civilizations like Rome but that inevitably crumble into a “Dark Age.” This theory mirrors a proposal offered by Carroll Quigley who contends that all civilizations follow a series of stages that begin with a

gestation era, move through an imperial stage, and end in decay and collapse, all of which happen despite the efforts to stop the process by people who knew better.

In the second theory, the one he prefers, Bromfield believes that human history is driven, not by inevitable forces, but by individuals who emerge at certain moments in history and who mold historical events by the force of their personalities. When these leaders possess insight and worldliness, good things happen, but when they are cursed by unscrupulous motives, death, disaster, and destruction follow.

This theory, the theory I have taken the liberty of labeling “history by the individual,” seems to dominate Bromfield’s writing, including not only his novels but also his socio-political books, speeches, radio shows, and articles. This is why, for example, in his political pamphlet, *England, A Dying Oligarchy*, he paints a damaging portrait of Neville Chamberlain who, Bromfield claims, was so keen on preserving England’s economic stability that he was willing to betray the Czechoslovakians by signing the Munich Agreement ceding the Sudetenland to Hitler and opening the door to the Second World War.

The odd thing about Bromfield’s theory of history, however, is that, unlike political philosophers like Thomas Carlyle and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel who built their personal theories of “history by the individual,” by praising the actions of successful leaders with positive personality traits, Bromfield does the opposite. He condemns the actions of failed leaders who have flaws that lead them to make disastrous decisions with horrible consequences.

Still, this may be the product of his narrative technique which predates by several decades his attempt to explain his theory of history. Moreover, in the final analysis Bromfield, did not write history; he wrote fiction (most of the time anyway), and fiction is often more interesting if the story chronicles a flawed individual who struggles to overcome those flaws regardless of whether he or she is victorious or defeated on the last page.

It is a pity that Bromfield never finished *Before It's Too Late*. Had he done so, we might have discovered who in history would have filled Bromfield’s definition of a powerful, successful leader. My bet would be Elizabeth I of England, the architect of the British Empire, but then, I am an Anglophile at heart, and Bromfield, as we know, was not. So, perhaps, St. Joan of Arc is a better choice. Yes, I’m sure. For Bromfield Joan of Arc is the perfect choice.

**Did You Know?**

You can the Malabar Farm Foundation through the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Your Kroger Plus Card can be linked to a charity so that each time you shop for groceries or get gas a percentage will be credited to the charity of your choice. If you do not already have a Kroger Plus Card one can be obtained at the Kroger Customer Service desk. Then, go online at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com), create an account and link your Kroger Plus Card to the Malabar Farm Foundation from the list of charities.

**The Malabar Farm Foundation**

**Contact Us**

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- Friend** - \$100 / year
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